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*· Congress passed the Horse Protection Act in 1970 to eliminate the cruel and inhumane practice of soring horses. How close are we to achieving the goal?*

Sadly, not close at all. I believe that until the owners are also punished and the criminals are given lifetime bans we will continue to see sore horses in the show ring. Chains and pads should also be banned from the show ring.

*· Can the industry achieve a consensus on how to carry out a self-regulatory program to enforce the Horse Protection Act in a consistent way?*

No, the industry will never achieve a consensus on how to carry out a self-regulatory program because the offenders are the ones making the decisions. People that have been ticketed or suspended should not be allowed to serve in any manner on boards that make these kinds of decisions.

*· What responsibilities should USDA-certified Horse Industry Organizations (HIOs) have within the industry?*

The USDA was given the responsibility to end soring. The industry will never, ever police itself and only an outside entity can regulate and put a stop to this atrocious practice.

*· How can the industry reconcile its inherent competition aspect with ensuring compliance with the Horse Protection Act?*

The Walking horse was not meant to perform on pads and chains. I have no doubt there will still be shows and competition with sound horses if we look to organizations such as FOSH and NWAHA. They have no problems with sound horses and competition.

*· What can USDA do now (and in the future) to ensure compliance?*

It is so simple that I am a little frustrated at these types of questions. Punish the offenders. Really punish them with jail time, large fines, and lifetime suspensions. Punish the owners as well as the trainers. I guarantee soring will stop pretty darn fast if owners were held responsible for what happens to their horses. A mother is charged when a boyfriend abuses her child. It is the same type of situation. The owners are ultimately responsible for their animals and letting someone torture their horse should not go unpunished.

*· What responsibilities should USDA have within the industry with respect to enforcement and what hinders oversight of the HIOs and/or industry?*

The USDA must regulate and recommend penalties because our industry will never police itself. Especially when those making the rules are guilty of soring themselves.

*· Should there be a prohibition of all action devices?*

Yes. Yes. Yes. It has been proven over and over that these devices are only used to cause pain. I can put chains on my Walkers all day and nothing happens. They may pick their feet up for a few minutes but as soon as they are used to it they walk normally. Ask anyone that have used bell boots, it is the same thing. The BL horses do what they do from pain, not training.

*· Should there be a prohibition of pads?*

Yes. Our early WGC's did not wear pads. There is not a need for pads; these horses are a small percent of our breed. Pads and heavy shoes should be banned.

*· Currently the Horse Protection regulations have a shoe weight limit on yearlings. Should there now be a shoe weight limit for all aged horses?*

I am upset that yearlings are wearing shoes. What for? Riding a yearling is disgusting and cruel. Needless to say I believe all horses should be barefoot or shod with keg shoes. The fact that you are asking this is more than a little disturbing to me. There are numerous studies and common sense should show you that the Tennessee Walker does not need heavy shoes, pads, and chains to compete. Our breed history shows what a Walking horse champion should be. Please help my breed. I have seen the abuse and torture and until someone steps in and puts a stop to it these horses will continue to suffer. The burners as we call them are the minority, a very loud minority and they will not stop until there are real and serious consequences to their actions.